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"I was working!" Women Smugglers on Ecuador's Borders

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Abstract: Intersectional inequalities supported by systems of oppression based on gender, class, race and geographical location led women to become smugglers in Ecuador's border provinces of Carchi and El Oro. These systems have fostered unequal access to paid work. Customs control, police and military subsumed under national security further aggravate women's access to an income. In 2011, the Ecuadorian government launched the Comprehensive Security Plan to complement its militarized response to security threats, like smuggling. Although this initiative incorporated a human security discourse, it did not recognize the diversity of women's experiences of inequality. Drawing on Black feminism's idea of intersectionality, matrix of domination and feminist critiques of national security, the concept of "feminist critical human security" is advanced. Women smugglers are characterized as criminals by the discourse of border security authorities. However, smuggling has become an alternative to the lack of job opportunities in the border region.

Key words: Border; Ecuador; intersectionality; smuggling; women; work.

Resumen: Desigualdades interseccionales apoyadas por sistemas de opresión basados en género, clase, raza y ubicación geográfica motivaron a mujeres que viven en las provincias fronterizas de Carchi y El Oro en Ecuador a convertirse en contrabandistas. Estos sistemas han fomentado el acceso desigual al trabajo remunerado. El control aduanero, la policía y los militares motivados por la seguridad nacional agravan aún más el acceso de las mujeres a un ingreso. En el 2011, el gobierno ecuatoriano lanzó el Plan de Seguridad Integral para complementar su respuesta militarizada a las amenazas de seguridad, como el contrabando. A pesar que esta iniciativa incorporó un discurso basado en la seguridad humana, no reconoció la diversidad de las experiencias de desigualdad de las mujeres. A partir de la idea de interseccionalidad, el concepto de matriz de dominación del feminismo negro y la crítica feminista de la seguridad nacional, se avanza el concepto de "seguridad humana desde una perspectiva feminista crítica." Las mujeres contrabandistas son caracterizadas como delincuentes por el discurso de seguridad fronteriza. Sin embargo, el contrabando se ha convertido en una alternativa a la falta de oportunidades de empleo en la región fronteriza.

Palabras claves: Frontera; Ecuador; interseccionalidad; contrabando; mujeres; trabajo.

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How is women's involvement in smuggling related to the conditions of inequality in Ecuador's border provinces of El Oro and Carchi? Do human security policies take the intersections of gender, race, class and geographical location into consideration to improve women's security in the border region? I address these questions informed by the concept of Feminist Critical Human Security (FCHS). This concept draws on feminist critiques of national security, a critical human security perspective and Black Feminism concepts of intersectionality and matrix of domination. By being attentive to power relations, FCHS understands how insecurity relates to people's daily lives in sexist, racist, classist and geographical ways in Ecuador's border zones. I claim that women's involvement in smuggling is not just a national security issue but reflects a myriad of other human security features based on intersectional inequalities[1] that have limited women's access to paid work.

Feminist Critiques to National Security

Feminist scholarship entered the study of national security to challenge this dominant security understanding. The state-centric concept of national security fosters a self-interested agenda aimed at defending states' interests. A national security policy includes a traditional defense policy and non-military actions designed to ensure a state's capacity to survive as a political entity and protect vital national interests against existing and potential threats (TRAGER, 1973; LOUW, 1978). National security often remains ambiguously defined and indeed draws much of its power from this symbolic ambiguity, allowing political and military elites to influence domestic and international affairs by invoking it (BUZAN, 1991). This ambiguity entails an intrinsic subjectivity particularly in defining threats to any nation's security (ROMM, 1993). International relations feminists, such as Thomas (1992), Tickner (2005) and Peterson (1992) argue that national security merely encourages the defense of states' territorial boundaries, values, interests and resources. Enloe (1989), Tickner (1992), Peterson (1992) Steans (1998), Grant (1991) and Sylvester (1994), questioned the omission of women in the masculine discourse on national security. Military capability, as an assurance against threats to the state, frequently is antithetical to individuals, particularly to women (TICKNER, 1997). In fact, national security is responsible for structural gender violence faced by women; states deploy national security initiatives to centralize authority, exercise coercive power and legitimize structural violence through institutionalized patriarchal customs (PETERSON, 1992). Feminist scholars have also documented the relationship between gendered bodies and security; gendered bodies perform security (SHEPHERD, 2010; ZALEWSKI, 2010; TICKNER, 1997). Examples include masculinized bodies, such as security forces, and feminized bodies, such as women smugglers in border regions. The incursion of feminism into the field of security studies contests the restriction of security to masculine high politics, fosters the widening of solutions to threats and includes women's explanations of how their governments aggravate their everyday lived experiences of insecurity. Specifically, this article views masculine national security discourses and practices as gendered, racialized policing and

[1] Throughout this work, the term "intersectional inequalities" refers to inequality based on the intersection of identities such as race, class, gender and the urban/rural divide.

discriminatory of women's informal work in Ecuador's border zones. The following section examines, from a critical security perspective, the concept of human security understood as a shift in security studies that gives priority to the individual as the referent of security.

Critical Human Security

The 1994 UN Human Development Report is considered the foundational document for the human security paradigm. Whereas national security foster government's control of territory and recognition by other states, human security challenges practices and institutions that give priority to "high politics" rather than to individual experiences of insecurity.

Human security is rooted in the capabilities approach developed by Amartya Sen, which views the individual as an autonomous chooser concerned about securing his/her own life and dignity. Influenced by a liberal tradition, Sen's approach views a universal human who shares common rights and capabilities. Nevertheless, an individual's security and capability to choose depend on its social location (MARHIA, 2013). Despite the inclusive nature of the human security approach, the term "human" does not overcome certain gender silences, which results in only a partial understanding of security (HUDSON, 2005). Denying differences among women is also problematic. Since gender is intertwined with other identities such as race, class and nationality, a critical feminist perspective connects individual experiences in a particular social location (HUDSON, 2005).

A critical perspective enriches human security by recognizing the particularities and needs of each community and all of its members. By recognizing diversity, critical human security (CHS) remains policy-relevant and views the individual as a social subject immersed in various contexts (NEWMAN, 2010). Moreover, CHS fosters non-western security perspectives to empower communities. Informed by post-colonialism, an emancipatory version of human security entails a bottom-up approach, engages with local understandings of security and empowers individuals to develop a human security agenda that fit their local political, economic and social needs (RICHMOND, 2011). Arturo Escobar's post-development perspective (1994), influences CHS because it embraces the concerns of the marginalized and those who lack political power; it celebrates local knowledge and a strong community participation in security planning (ROCHLIN; GALLÓN, 2015). CHS is not another universal formula in public policy design; it takes into account local contexts and public policy beneficiaries' opinions aimed at improving their quality of life. By including the voices of local women and by identifying the structural inequalities that create women's insecurity in Ecuador's border zones, a CHS approach can inspire the transformation of current conditions of insecurity that led women to become smugglers. In so doing, it also disrupts patterns of domination based on race, class, gender and geographical location that are the root of social problems such as violence, inequality and exclusion. An intersectional feminist lens of security, therefore, must inform and enrich the concept of CHS to shed light on the question of women's insecurity and smuggling in border zones.

Intersectionality and Matrix of Domination

The notion of "sisterhood" and the White feminist assumption of the existence of common interests among all women are problematic. In contrast, currents of Black feminism have responded to the invisibility of the particularities of women's experiences of discrimination. Black feminist scholar Kimberlé Williams Crenshaw (1989), one of the founders of Critical Race Theory in the U.S. legal academy, introduced the term intersectionality. This term analyzes the experiences of discrimination of several social groups, especially women of color (CHOO AND FEREE, 2009) and conceptualizes the relation between systems of oppression as they construct a person's multiple social locations in hierarchies of power and privilege (CARASTATHIS, 2014). Through the study of intersectionality, we can understand the interaction between gender, race, class and other categories of difference "in individual lives, social practices, institutional arrangements and cultural ideologies and the outcomes of these interactions in terms of power" (DAVIS, 2008: 68). Similarly, the concept of matrix of domination contributes to the understanding of race, class and gender as interlocking systems of oppression. Hill Collins (2000) argues that it is important to view the power structures organized in the intersecting relations of race, class and gender that frame the social position of individuals. This matrix explains the interlocking inequalities experienced by women as gendered, raced, classed and sexualized bodies. For instance, an analysis of interlocking inequalities can challenge the idea that the overrepresentation of Black and Indigenous women in poverty statistics is due to their poor working ethics. Black and Indigenous women have always worked but they have been restricted to jobs that kept them in poverty. To understand the devalued work assigned to Black and Indigenous women, it is necessary to analyze the racism and sexism imbricated in the occupations available to them.

Identity markers and process of differentiation based on gender, race, class and the rural/urban divide interact, affecting the security of rural Black women, Indigenous women and urban Mestizo women in Ecuador's border zones. In the Ecuadorian context, Indigenous and Black women experience racism in different ways than that of Indigenous and Black men and sexism in ways dissimilar from the experiences of Mestizo women. The notion of matrix of domination and intersectionality can map the ways in which racism, sexism and classism have shaped conceptualizations of women smugglers as criminals within the national security discourse, ignoring the unique characteristic of women's interlocked inequalities that prevent them to work in a different sector.

Methods

I obtained the empirical data of this study through three methods: 1) analysis of official documents and press; 2) twenty-two semi-structured interviews; and 3) two workshops with local women (one in the rural parish of La Concepción in Carchi province and the other in the city of Huaquillas in El Oro province). I examined official documents such as the *National Agenda for Women and Equality of Gender 2014-2017*, development plans (*National Plan for Good Living* 2009-2013/ 2013- 2017), and security plans (*Plan Ecuador* 2007 and *Comprehensive Security Plan* 2011). During one-year (2013-2014) I reviewed articles from five Ecuadorian newspapers corresponding to the period 2007-2014; I analyzed security

authorities' perceptions and discourses towards smuggling at the borders and government policies on gender issues, security and development. The criteria for conducting interviews with government officials, leaders of women's organizations and local women was based on: 1) perspective (those who approve or disapprove government policies related to security, development and gender equity; and 2) diversity (middle/low class, rural/urban and Black/Indigenous/Mestizo women). Finally, workshops with local women generated information on collective views of women's experiences of insecurity and inequality at the border as well as recommendations to improve their security conditions. Thirty-two women participated in both workshops. Two local organizations, El Oro Women's Movement (MMO) in Huaquillas and the National Confederation of Black Women (CONAMUNE) in La Concepción, actively contributed to the organization of the workshops. The themes discussed were border security, employment and gender inequality; the participants connected these topics to smuggling.

The comprehensive security plan: smuggling as a threat

Beginning in 2007, Rafael Correa's administration reformed the *1979 National Security Doctrine* that favored the state as the exclusive referent of security. This government rethought the security agenda in less military and more multidimensional terms. Ecuador's security policymakers have recognized that many conflicts involve non-traditional threats *within* nations rather than traditional threats *between* nations. As a result, Ecuador's Ministry of Security launched Plan Ecuador in 2007 and the Comprehensive Security Plan (CSP) in 2011. In particular, the CSP has acknowledged that non-state actors such as transnational criminals, drug traffickers, terrorists and smugglers in border zones provoke threats to national security.

Since smugglers are considered a threat to national security, CSP places particular interest on activities such as the smuggling of fuels, propane cylinders, clothing and food. This type of smuggling to Colombia and Peru creates an underground economy in Ecuador's border areas; women smugglers have become actors in this economy. Ecuador's border economy is producing a regional development and trade flow based on "what is expensive here is cheap there" (CARRIÓN, 2011:1). Predominantly, the incentive for smuggling fuel and propane cylinders is the price difference between the countries; Ecuador subsidizes both fuel and propane cylinders. In Ecuador, the official price of a propane cylinder of 15 kilograms is $1.60. In Colombia, the same cylinder reaches $20. According to the Ecuadorian National Police in Carchi province, Ecuador's subsidized propane cylinder is smuggled through thirty-seven clandestine routes on the northern border; this activity involves around 500 families (EL COMERCIO, April 26, 2012). Border security authorities have identified Carchi and El Oro as border provinces where smuggling of fuels, propane cylinders and other goods takes place.

Map 1. Ecuador's border

Source: espanol.mapsofworld.com (accessed on January 19, 2016). Permission given on January 19, 2016.

By increasing the number of operatives and confiscations, security authorities seek to decrease losses produced by fuel smuggling. During Ecuador-Peru's IX meeting for Anti-Smuggling in September 2013, the representative of the Ecuadorian Ministry of Security claimed that Ecuador loses $37 million annually due to fuel smuggling on the Peruvian border (EL COMERCIO, September 26, 2013). This statement highlights the national security treatment to this issue as a criminal threat within Ecuador's multidimensional security policies. In contrast, for borderlanders, smuggling has been a traditional way of living and source of income.

By attempting to challenge practices and institutions that prioritize national security rather than individual experiences of insecurity, the CSP includes a human security approach. Thus, the CSP sought to confront the involvement of Ecuadorians in activities considered illegal by security forces. Under this plan, the Ministry of Security outlines comprehensive policies that articulate security sub-systems addressing all human security dimensions (economic, food, health, environmental, personal, community and political) mentioned in the *1994 UN Human Development Report* (MINISTERIO COORDINADOR DE SEGURIDAD-MCS, 2011).

The CSP refers to six strategic objectives aimed at protecting human security and national interests simultaneously. The objectives seek to: 1) Reduce crime and violence in society; 2) Protect sovereignty and integral territoriality; 3) Increase presence in border zones; 4) Prevent natural disasters; 5) Promote research and technology; and 6) Strengthen democracy. The third objective aims at increasing the state's presence in national territory, especially on the borders and areas of high risk, to

improve the quality of life of citizens. The strategies of this objective include development projects; international cooperation; social services; surveillance and control at airports, ports and borders; and increase of military, police and judicial presence at the borders (MCS, 2011). This plan understands that a higher level of human insecurity at the border can turn into a threat to national security. By securing humans, the CSP sought to diminish a risk society.[2] The human-security state is not perfect; it can justify repressive securitization practices aimed at rescuing some humans by demonizing others (AMAR, 2013). By instrumentalizing human security discourse to advance national security goals, security plans such as the CSP ignores the nexus between insecurity, intersectional inequalities and the involvement of women in smuggling. The third objective fails to explain how intersectional inequalities will be addressed to improve the security conditions of Indigenous, Black or Mestizo women in border zones. Furthermore, the CSP ignores the imperative need to empower individuals and communities to identifying and implementing solutions to their insecurity conditions.

The link between national security and human security in the Ecuadorian case demonstrates that a statist definition of human security currently prevails within policymaking circles. This generates a misunderstanding of the original definition, which was human-centered.

Intersectional inequalities and women smugglers

Pronounced regional, ethnic and gender inequalities have mainly affected the Indigenous and Afro-Ecuadorian population. Statistical information about illiteracy and violence based on gender, class, race, ethnicity and location informs policymakers about the diversity of women to tackle the multiple experiences of inequality and violence imbued in interlocking systems of oppression such as patriarchy, classism and racism. These intersectional inequalities have limited women's job options in the border provinces of El Oro and Carchi.

Illiteracy and schooling indicators show that Indigenous women, the majority of whom reside in rural areas, remain strongly disadvantaged while White and Mestizo men and women, having greater access to education, remain the most privileged social groups. Indigenous women and men have significantly higher illiteracy rates (28.3 and 13.7 percent, respectively) compared to Mestizo women and men (5.9 and 4.2 percent, respectively) (INEC, 2010). The disparity is even greater when considering only 3.1 percent of White women are illiterate (INEC, 2013). As late as 2010, Indigenous women still had on average less than four years of schooling, compared to the national average that exceeds seven to eight years (SENPLADES, 2013). Moreover, the illiteracy rate by geographical location shows that rural women have the highest illiteracy rate with 15.2 percent, compared to 4.6 percent of urban women

[2] Contingency, as a security dispositive, allows the regulation of life through biopolitics. The contingent, as risk, gives rise to a risk society that must be regulated. Michael Dillon (2007) points out that security is contained in discourses of danger [such as the discourse of insecurity produced on Ecuador's borders to tackle smuggling] around different referent objects of security [such as state, individual, or life], giving rise to governmental technologies through state policies.

(INEC, 2013), thus illustrating the importance of implementing literacy policies for rural women to improve their job opportunities.

In Ecuador, 6 out of 10 women have experienced some type of gender violence. The greatest percentage of gender violence is present in Indigenous women with 67.8 percent and Afro-Ecuadorian women with 66.7 percent (INEC-CDT, 2011). Other socioeconomic variables show a correlation between gender violence and education level. At all levels of education, gender violence exceeds 50 percent; however, in women who have lower levels of education, violence reaches 70 percent (INEC-CDT, 2011). Violence against women is critical in the two provinces included in this study: Some 45 percent women in El Oro and around 50 percent of women in Carchi have suffered gender-based violence (INEC-SENPLADES, 2011). This statistical information shows that inequality is not only based on gender but also on race and socio-economic status, worsening Indigenous and Afro-Ecuadorian women's conditions of insecurity.

During Rafael Correa's administration (2007-2017), there was an attempt to include traditionally marginalized social groups in planning initiatives through several workshops. A member of the National Council of Black Women (CONAMUNE) in Carchi pointed out the lack of implementation of policies to tackle local women's intersected conditions of inequality.

> We could say that the state has conducted its workshops […] the *agenda of women* reflects our needs […] within the topic of inequalities, but they really have not been implemented. There are no new public policies created to diminish the theme of racism, gender inequality and unemployment (Interview, July 31, 2013).

Racism and sexism limit Afro-Ecuadorian and Indigenous women's occupational opportunities. The social location of these women limit them to agricultural and domestic work, promoting circumstances of inequality and reducing their economic security. A limited number of Mestizo middle-class women, benefit from employment policies. Inclusive employment policies with a focus on intersectional inequalities based on gender, class, race and rural/urban divide are not included in human security or development policies. As a result, informal survival strategies, such as smuggling, take place in border zones.

While smuggling is under the control of masculinized institutions[3] that utilize national security practices of confiscation and repression to punish borderlanders, women participate with some level of significance in this activity. Ethnographic studies demonstrate that drug smuggling victimizes but also empowers women, depending on their social class (BAILEY 2013; CAMPBELL 2008). In Huaquillas, low-income Mestizo women smugglers can be victims but in Carchi, low-income Black women are empowered. Women's experiences of oppression may not matter to mainstream approaches of security but if those experiences motivate women to smuggle across the border subsidized fuel and propane cylinders, these women become targets of national security policy. The Ecuadorian masculinized and militarized discourse of border

[3] I use the term "masculinized institutions" to refer to male dominated institutions in Ecuador such the Police Department and the Army Forces.

security tackles smuggling as threat to national interests and ignores progressive understandings of security that view women as referent of security. Instead, women smugglers are constructed as a threat. This construction, which shows asymmetrical power relations between male security authorities and female smugglers, denies the root of the involvement of women in smuggling activities.

Although men and women are involved in smuggling networks, a great percentage of the groups that are engaged in the *hormiga* smuggling (smuggling in small amounts) are women. Informal traders who seek to evade controls through this micro smuggling tend to recruit women. For a Customs officer in Chacras, El Oro province, "these traders pay women approximately six dollars per trip, with three trips a day these women get $18 US dollars" (Interview, July 15, 2013). The Hydrocarbon Control Agency believes that only bigger smuggling networks get a profit of $3,000 USD per month, becoming a profitable business (Interview, August 12, 2013) in a country such as Ecuador where the monthly minimum wage is $394 USD. Although, the *hormiga* smuggling has become a short-term survival strategy for women who live in provinces located at the border, it does not tackle the structural inequalities that women face in their daily lives.

Arrests of women from 2012 to 2014 demonstrate how border security practices are deployed. One hundred ninety-three women were arrested for allegedly smuggling during 2012 and seventy women were arrested between January and May 2013 (National Customs Surveillance Office, July 1, 2013). In two consecutive years, (2013-2014) operations conducted by the Unit for the Investigation of Energetic and Hydrocarbons Crimes detained 25 women (Undersecretary of Police of the Ministry of Interior of Ecuador, September 11, 2014).

Local women in El Oro province perceive their arrests to be linked to their age, gender and socio-economic status. While middle class mestizo women, driving their own car, have little difficulties crossing border custom control, low-income women are stopped frequently (Workshop in Huaquillas on July 13, 2013). As former victim of domestic violence and the sole provider of the household, Martha decided to sell fish in Peru. As a young poor woman who crossed the border on a bus by herself, she became the target of border surveillance. The border as a physical division is not clear for her; she views the border as a space for trade, where she can generate an income to provide for her family.

> Once they [Peruvian security authorities] arrested me, because I like to trade. I was going to Huaquillas to sell fish in a restaurant, and a Peruvian man sat beside me [on the bus]. He asked, 'where are you going?' and I told him that I was going to sell fish in Huaquillas. He said that it was good to sell fish in Peru […] He took me to a market and I went to Zarumilla [Peruvian city in the Tumbes region] in a small bus. […] I did not know how to come back, I took a CIFA [a bus with cross-border routes] to return. They [Peruvian border authorities] asked [me] for documents, permits, I had nothing. Oh, I cried, now I was suffering. They incarcerated me in Aguas Verdes [Peru]. I was crying while I was trying to explain to them what I was doing there. I was working! Unfortunately, you have to get a safe-conduct. It was a lack of

> information. He [referring to the Peruvian man] did not tell me that I have to do these things. Then I was afraid to go there [across the border] (Interview on July 4, 2013).

Practices of border security target fewer middle-class mestizo men. While waiting for my scheduled interview with the Head of the Chacras Customs office in El Oro province, I observed the interaction between customs officers and locals. Two customs officers stopped a middle-class mestizo male who was coming back from Peru with a small amount of cell phones without receipts. However, after a few minutes the officers let him go.

Gender and race are factors involved when border authorities define who the smugglers are at the northern border. For example, during an interview, a customs officer singled out Afro-Ecuadorian women from *Valle del Chota* in Carchi province as using pregnancy as a strategy to smuggle across the border.

> First, even though a woman is aggressive, it is very difficult to imprison her. This scenario is, even more, complex when women are pregnant. Many women use pregnancy as a legal protection, they cannot be arrested. If you know that a woman is pregnant, the judge stops the process immediately. If you did not know that a woman is pregnant, but she proves to have two or three months of pregnancy, she is released…They also bring children in their arms. They are friendly [women], this is terrible (Interview, July 1st, 2013).

Since the law is gendered, it protects women because they are considered vulnerable. The customs officer's testimony describes the patriarchal implementation of the law, in which pregnancy involves gendered ideas of femininity and vulnerability; these ideas prevent border security authorities to treat women smugglers in the same way they treat men. Moreover, when I asked him if Mestizo women use this strategy, he commented that mainly Afro-Ecuadorian women have enough audacity to use pregnancy as a strategy to successfully smuggle and get away with a "deserved" punishment. If this is the case, the Customs officer's comments are not only sexist but also racist. These comments reflect the existence of processes of differentiation and system of oppression in discourses and practices at the border. The customs officer also highlighted that women are not the leaders, male smugglers use pregnant women to be successful in their "illegal" activities; this comment involves a complete denial of women's agency and own will to get involved in smuggling. For instance, in Carchi province, women smugglers work together with their male partners to increase the income of the household (Interview with former Undersecretary of the Development and Planning, August 14, 2013). By helping family and community members to smuggle, empowered women challenge "acceptable" social constructions of femininity, but this transgression of boundaries still contributes to women's caregiving role. The presence of national security practices to tackle smuggling perpetuates interlocking systems of oppression. The absence of a feminist critical human security approach within public policy in Ecuador's border zones has contributed to the involvement of women in smuggling.

Planning feminist critical human security in border zones

Rather than supporting greater inclusion, Correa's administration dismantled the National Women's Council (CONAMU) leaving only a temporary 'gender transition commission' in its place with limited technical and financial resources to implement policies for women. The commission emerged to be led by party loyalists who did not come from the women's movements. This has affected the design, implementation and monitoring of projects that promote job opportunities in the border provinces included in this study.

Policy interventions that are based solely on gender reflect an incomplete knowledge of women's lives; as a result, they cannot be effective. In many instances, gender is not the primary cause of inequality. Policy is not experienced in the same way by all populations; important differences have to be taken into account to address the inequalities experienced by various social groups (HANKIVSKY AND CORMIER, 2011; BISHWAKARMA, R., V. Hunt, and A. ZAJICEK, 2007). Different forms of oppression interconnect and mutually reinforce one another, creating inequalities among women (HANKIVSKY, 2005). When planning security policies within a feminist critical human security (FCHS) framework, it is important to take into account the voices of those women who face intersectional inequalities. Within this framework, the material needs of women – such as the access to employment, health care and education - must be tackled in conjunction with a transformation of the discursive practices that have constructed intersections of inequality within systems of oppression; discourses perpetuate material inequalities. Applying a FCHS framework requires to move beyond the mere recognition of categories of difference (race, gender, class or geography) among women to transform structures of domination. The transformation of processes of differentiation (racialization or gendering) must tackle systems of domination such as racism, colonialism, classism and patriarchy. I argue that the absence of this framework within security policy in Ecuador's border zones has contributed to the involvement of women in smuggling.

The FCHS framework is informed by two approaches that have been developed for applying intersectionality to public policy. These approaches will be useful when recommending human security policies for women in border provinces. The first approach, which draws on the work of Bishwakarma, Hunt, and Zajicek (2007), integrates intersectionality into the policy-making cycle to capture the interaction between two or more forms of inequality. The phases of the policy cycle involve intersectional problem definition, policy formulation, implementation and evaluation. Problem definition is understood as a way in which a social condition is represented in a public discourse. For example, if the issue of the low employment rate among Ecuadorian women is defined as a problem of gender inequality, policymakers will formulate policies to increase women's access to employment opportunities. Nonetheless, if the problem is defined as the high unemployment rate among Black women in Carchi Province, policies must be formulated to increase employment opportunities for Black women in that province. In this example, public policy cannot be designed to benefit an abstract woman; it needs to be specific and contextualized.

The second approach 'gender-relational' offers policy-makers a more palatable version of intersectionality as it addresses power relations within social groups. The gender-relational approach moves away from equating gender with women and girls, to examine the complex relationships between gender and other aspects of identity markers, such as age, class, sexuality, disability, ethnicity, religious background, marital status and geography (MYRTTINEN, H., NAUJOKS, J. and EL-BUSHRA, J., 2014). A gender-relational approach recommends interventions that focus on groups of people who are most vulnerable; it also pays attention to those whose attitudes and practices most need to be changed. Finally, a gender-relational approach abstains from considering women as "objects of development" who need to be "modernized" through external interventions. Rather it acknowledges women as active agents of change (Schilling, J., Froese, R., Naujoks, J. 2018). In different contexts, a gender-relational analysis might suggest focusing, for example, on the particular vulnerabilities or strengths of young, rural, widowed Black women in a particular province in the border zone; or elderly, lower-class urban Mestizo women.

During the workshops, women (who have smuggled at least once or have helped a family/ community member to smuggle) discussed about security, employment and equality as a way to improve women's security from an intersectional perspective such as FCHS. Afro-Ecuadorian women expressed that they suffer a quadruple type of discrimination for being women, Black, poor and living in a rural area. In Table 1, I have compiled the main problems and solutions identified by them.

Table 1. Rural low-income Afro-Ecuadorian women in La Concepción, CARCHI province

PROVINCE	EMPLOYMENT	GENDER EQUALITY	SECURITY
Results workshop with Rural low-income Afro-Ecuadorian women in La Concepción, CARCHI province	**Problem 1:** Women working in nurseries of MIES[4] with no professional qualification were fired. **Solution:** Re-open the nursery. Free education and implementation of the accelerated baccalaureate;[5] Degrees in early childhood education,	**Problem 1:** Decrease *machismo*. Men believe that women are good only to be mothers and wives. Women are also *machistas*. **Solution:** Educate community members through: workshops with men and women about the equal division of roles in the household; creative games such as volleyball or card games; workshops about empowerment, leadership	**Problem 1:** Food Security: More production and clean water. Economic security: There are not opportunities at the National Bank of Foment to get a loan because women do not qualify for them. This situation creates emigration. **Solution:** Create productive projects

[4] Ministerio de Inclusión Económica y Social del Ecuador (MIES).

[5] The accelerated baccalaureate is a program designed for adults who could not finish their studies, it is ran by the Minister of Education of Ecuador.

	administration, finance and accounting. **Problem 2:** No jobs, people migrate to Quito and Ibarra (big cities). **Solution:** Remuneration to the mother who raises a child (0-3 years old). **Problem 3:** Lack of market for local products. **Solution:** Sustainable productive projects of beans and cassava. Transformation to add value. **Problem 4:** Lack of market research. Failure of previous projects due to lack of monitoring and of training in marketing strategies. **Solution:** Training in project and public policy design; mapping productive projects; and training women in political participation.	and equal rights; TV, radio and theater campaigns with messages such as "Love me, Respect me" to teach values against violence and to attack indifference. **Problem 2:** Boys and girls cannot view more violence in their households. **Solution:** Encourage a good role model that does not reproduce gender- and race- based violence. **Problem 3:** Too many violent TV programs. **Solution:** Check TV programs that children watch. **Problem 4**: Decrease racism. **Solution:** Non-discrimination campaign. Ethno-education through formal and popular education.	to reduce poverty and migration of the entire population of the Chota Valley, Salinas, and La Concepción. **Problem 2:** Health Security: Health is not for everybody, the local clinics lack specialties and the waiting list is too long. **Solution:** Change the way appointments are booked (by phone). Provide a sufficient supply of drugs and physicians in clinics. **Problem 3:** Personal Security: Suicide, drug trafficking, smuggling and child trafficking in Rumichaca and Chota Valley. **Solution:** Awareness campaigns to prevent these problems are necessary.

Source: Workshops conducted by the author in La Concepción on August 31, 2013.

While discussing the axis *employment*, women complained about the closure of a childcare center that was providing jobs to them and a safe place for their children. Since 2013, the Ministry of Economic and Social Inclusion requires that women who take care of children hold a degree in Early Childhood Education. Unfortunately, most local women, who previously worked at the childcare center have not even completed high school. For this reason, as noted in Table 1, women propose the creation of an accelerated baccalaureate

program in their community. They believe that to increase their economic security and to live with dignity, they must have access to education in rural areas that allows them to get a formal job.

Throughout the discussion about *gender equality*, women claimed that gender equality in the community can be achieved if men "give importance to women, respect their voices and their decisions." Carlota's testimony acknowledges the need to involve men in discussions about equality, as a significant step towards creating awareness and then transforming unequal gender relations.

> Men are *machistas;* they think we can only be wives and moms. I decided to work and to get into political life because I am concerned about the development of the community. I hope we do not only discuss among women. It would be good that men listen to us and see that we are not only good for *parir* [give birth] and to be in the *chacra* [space where vegetables and fruits are grown and animals are raised].

Unlike the case of Afro-Ecuadorian smugglers in Carchi, where men and women collaborate with each other to improve the community's economic security, in the workshop in Huaquillas a woman's response links the lack of employment to the presence of smuggling networks and illustrates how smuggling is a source of domination of women based on their gender and class.

> I think for us women, here in Huaquillas, it is hard to work […] Years ago, sales were great, you earned a lot for food, but not anymore. Right now, Huaquillas lives off the smuggling. It is a fight with the state, with officials. There was a time that women became pregnant… It was a terrible mess and that was the only way she, as the sole provider, was able to buy a meal for her children and stay at home. Since there was no other source of income […] It was easy [to smuggle fuel] because the state installed several gas stations [laughs]. The problem is that the state always got the defenseless people, not the true millionaires [big smuggling networks] who made more money than the poor and humble people did. Many have gone to jail for it. Why? Because they [the members of the smuggling networks] give you a car, make your work easier, you get paid for the day […] And the poor is to blame for and what about the one who has the money? The powerful one is the one who exploits women looking to make enough money on a daily basis. This is a mafia.

Table 2. Presents women's demands when they discussed about gender equality, security and how employment options could be improved in their border town.

Table 2. Planning Feminist Critical Human Security: Urban low-income Mestizo women in Huaquillas, El Oro province.

PROVINCE	EMPLOYMENT	GENDER EQUALITY	SECURITY
Results workshop with Urban low-income Mestizo women in Huaquillas, El Oro province	**Demand 1:** Being able to be your own boss [self-employed] **Solution:** Training in small business creation. **Demand 2:** Formation of small businesses. Government bond of solidarity invested in the creation of small business for women. **Solution:** Have easy access to micro credits. **Demand 3:** Being able to complete studies through distance learning or in the evenings. **Solution:** Training in finance, human relations, leadership and marketing. **Demand 4:** Extended hours of child care. **Solution:** Request a non-standard Schedule.	**Demand 1:** Creation of awareness among women of our value as women. **Solution:** Workshops and campaigns rejecting sexual, physical and psychological violence or situations of discrimination against women. **Demand 2:** Share household responsibilities. Equal respect between wife and husband/joint decision-making. **Solution:** Workshops with men and women to address the issue of mutual respect. **Demand 3:** Reject all forms of violence. **Solution:** Educate our children, boys and girls.	**Demand 1:** Stop the corruption among police and judges. **Solution:** Grievance system without retaliation. Awareness campaigns to prevent smuggling and drug trafficking. Monitoring crime.

Source: Workshops conducted by the author in Huaquillas on July 13, 2013.

During the workshop, women referred to the initiative *sewing development* [translated as Hilando el Desarrollo], which was founded in 2011. This program promotes the economic inclusion and social mobility of thousands of artisans in the textile sector; women sew school uniforms and sell them to the public schools. Women believe that the implementation of a similar program, through a joint effort of the District office in Machala and El Oro Women's Movement can improve women's economic security in Huaquillas and reduce the involvement in smuggling.

Through the analysis of empirical data, this study demonstrates that Mestizo men dominate racialized and masculinized border security institutions. The gender, class and race of the smugglers affect predominant practices of security. For instance, border security officers more often stop Black low-income women. The gendering and racialization of interactions show asymmetrical power relations based on intersectional inequities in border security practices. Furthermore, by being aware of their intersectional identities, local women have identified their human security needs and solutions.

Conclusion

Informed by a feminist critical human security approach, this work analyzes how inequalities based on gender, class, race and location comprise the web of power relations that have led to women's involvement in smuggling in Ecuador's border provinces of El Oro and Carchi. It has also examined how human security policies such as the Comprehensive Security Plan place little focus on the intersections of gender, race, class and geographical location, which perpetuate inequalities and women's insecurity on Ecuador borders, limiting their job opportunities.

In the Ecuadorian case, human security mainly complements national security initiatives. Border patrolling and capture of people involved in smuggling are insufficient to solve the multidimensional characteristics of this "security threat." By merely criminalizing women smugglers, security makers fail to promote human security in border zones. Rather national security values using a military approach to battle local threats, creating more insecurity for local women and their communities. A statist definition of human security currently prevails within policymaking circles generating a misunderstanding of the original definition, which was initially human-centered. If human security remains connected to a state-centered view in security policymaking, the presence of police, military, and customs officers in Ecuador's border zones will do little to dissuade smugglers who view their survival options as reduced in those areas.

Women's multiple experiences of inequality must be taken into consideration while formulating human security policies. By expanding the state-centric approach to security to one that includes human security inclusive of the intersections of gender, race, class and geographical location will help overcome the structural violence contained in systems of domination that naturalizes inequalities and limits the accomplishment of justice. An intersectional perspective of the human security approach has been recommended to address women's intersectional inequalities and to encourage women to move from being the subjects of discussion to agents of a transformative change.

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